

**CLAIMS**

What is claimed is:

1. A method in an electronic auction for generating off-increment proxy bids, said method comprising the  
5 steps of:
  - specifying a minimum increment for bidding on an item;
  - receiving a bid for said item from a first bidder which is currently a high bid for said item;
  - 10 identifying a previously recorded proxy bid from a second bidder which is greater than said current high bid but not greater than said current high bid plus said minimum increment; and
  - generating an off-increment bid which becomes a high  
15 bid for said item utilizing said proxy bid, wherein said second bidder holds a current high bid for said item, further wherein said off-increment bid does not increase said bid received from said first bidder by said increment, and wherein said off-increment bid does not  
20 exceed said proxy bid.
2. The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of generating an off-increment bid further comprises the steps of:
  - generating a proposed bid, said proposed bid being  
25 equal to said minimum increment plus a current high bid for said item;
  - determining if said proposed bid exceeds said proxy bid; and

in response to a determination that said proposed bid does exceed said proxy bid, awarding said item to said second bidder for said proxy bid, wherein said item is sold for said proxy bid.

5 3. The method according to claim 2, further comprising the step of in response to a determination that said proposed bid does not exceed said proxy bid, awarding said item to said second bidder for said proposed bid, wherein said item is sold for said proposed bid.

10 4. The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of generating an off-increment bid further comprises the steps of:

generating a proposed bid, said proposed bid being equal to said minimum increment plus a current high bid  
15 for said item;

determining if said proposed bid exceeds said proxy bid; and

in response to a determination that said proposed bid does not exceed said proxy bid, awarding said item to  
20 said second bidder for said proposed bid, wherein said item is sold for said proposed bid.

5. An electronic auction for generating off-increment proxy bids, comprising:

a minimum increment for bidding on an item;

25 a bid received for said item from a first bidder which is currently a high bid for said item;

a previously recorded proxy bid from a second bidder which is greater than said current high bid but not

greater than said current high bid plus said minimum increment; and

an off-increment bid generated by said electronic auction which becomes a high bid for said item utilizing

5 said proxy bid, wherein said second bidder holds a current high bid for said item, further wherein said off-increment bid does not increase said bid received from said first bidder by said increment, and wherein said off-increment bid does not exceed said proxy bid.

10 6. The electronic auction according to claim 5, further comprising:

a proposed bid, said proposed bid being equal to said minimum increment plus a current high bid for said item;

15 said electronic auction including a CPU executing code for determining if said proposed bid exceeds said proxy bid; and

20 in response to a determination that said proposed bid does exceed said proxy bid, said electronic auction for awarding said item to said second bidder for said proxy bid, wherein said item is sold for said proxy bid.

7. The electronic auction according to claim 6, further comprising in response to a determination that said proposed bid does not exceed said proxy bid, said 25 electronic auction for awarding said item to said second bidder for said proposed bid, wherein said item is sold for said proposed bid.

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8. The electronic auction according to claim 5, further comprising:

a proposed bid, said proposed bid being equal to said minimum increment plus a current high bid for said item;

said electronic auction including a CPU executing code for determining if said proposed bid exceeds said proxy bid; and

in response to a determination that said proposed bid does not exceed said proxy bid, said electronic auction for awarding said item to said second bidder for said proposed bid, wherein said item is sold for said proposed bid.

9. A computer readable medium in an electronic auction for generating off-increment proxy bids, said computer readable medium comprising:

instruction means for specifying a minimum increment for bidding on an item;

instruction means for receiving a bid for said item from a first bidder which is currently a high bid for said item;

instruction means for identifying a previously recorded proxy bid from a second bidder which is greater than said current high bid but not greater than said current high bid plus said minimum increment; and

instruction means for generating an off-increment bid which becomes a high bid for said item utilizing said proxy bid, wherein said second bidder holds a current high bid for said item, further wherein said off-increment bid does not increase said bid received

from said first bidder by said increment, and wherein  
said off-increment bid does not exceed said proxy bid.

10. The computer readable medium according to claim 9,  
wherein the instruction means for generating an  
5 off-increment bid further comprises:

instruction means for generating a proposed bid,  
said proposed bid being equal to said minimum increment  
plus a current high bid for said item;

10 instruction means for determining if said proposed  
bid exceeds said proxy bid; and

instruction means for in response to a determination  
that said proposed bid does exceed said proxy bid,  
awarding said item to said second bidder for said proxy  
bid, wherein said item is sold for said proxy bid.

15 11. The computer readable medium according to claim 10,  
further comprising instruction means for in response to a  
determination that said proposed bid does not exceed said  
proxy bid, awarding said item to said second bidder for  
said proposed bid, wherein said item is sold for said  
20 proposed bid.

12. The computer readable medium according to claim 9,  
wherein the instruction means for generating an  
off-increment bid further comprises:

25 instruction means for generating a proposed bid,  
said proposed bid being equal to said minimum increment  
plus a current high bid for said item;

instruction means for determining if said proposed  
bid exceeds said proxy bid; and

instruction means for in response to a determination  
that said proposed bid does not exceed said proxy bid,  
awarding said item to said second bidder for said  
proposed bid, wherein said item is sold for said proposed  
5 bid.

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